

City of Northampton, MA
Urban Forestry Commission (UFC)

December 2, 2020

Meeting Minutes

Submitted By: Debora Laizer

Meeting Called to Order

Richard Parasiliti Jr., Ex-officio Chair called the meeting to order at 4:34 p.m. and announced the virtual meeting through the Zoom platform.

Members present and absent/introductions:

Member	Present	Time if arriving late or leaving early
Richard Parasiliti Jr., Ex-officio Chair	X	
Marilyn Castriotta	X	
Susan Lofthouse, Vice Chair	X	
Molly Hale	X	
Jennifer Werner		
Rob Postel	X	
David Lukens	X	
Staff & Visitors	Present	Time if arriving late or leaving early
Debora Laizer, DPW Clerk	X	
Christina Petersen, Visitor	X	
Mollie Freilicher, Guest Speaker	X	
Celeste Palladino, Visitor	X	
Diane Scott, Visitor	X	5:33 p.m. arrival

Public Comment

- Celeste extended a Thank You to the UFC.

Review/approve minutes of 11/04/20 & 11/15/20 meetings

- Marilyn questioned if leaving at 6:00 p.m. should be stricken from the minutes if the meeting ends at 6:00 p.m.
- A motion was proposed, seconded and a roll call vote was taken. There was no further discussion.

Motion	Motion By:	Seconded By:	Vote:
To approve the 11/04/20 & 11/15/20 meeting minutes.	Molly Hale	Marilyn Castriotta	Yes 6, No 0, Abstain 0

Chat Feature

- Marilyn brought up the topic of the chat feature. It is fine to use in a public meeting but there is no chatting between commission members outside the meeting on agenda topics.

Chair/Tree Warden Report

- Jennifer Werner is absent due to the passing of her mother. Rich will send card from the committee.

- The Shade Tree hearing on 11/21/20 at 21 Stoddard Street for a 4 ½” cherry tree had no objections. Awaiting mitigation.
- Resident of Hickory Drive removed a tree without approval. A fine will be implemented up to \$500.00 under MGL. This tree was not on the GIS inventory.

Correspondence

- Tree Ordinance construction throughout the city especially in the Bay State area.
 - ❖ Rob suggested that the commission consider the consequences of tree protection as it might inhibit infill and raise the cost of housing.
 - ❖ Need for a special permit on the subdivision of a lot.
 - ❖ Dave suggested strengthening the STO to protect the urban canopy. This should be added to the agenda.
 - ❖ Molly asked if a developer requires a site plan. Is this a loophole? The STO should be updated with proposed changes to address these issues. Can these changes be made before this development happens?
 - ❖ Rich explained the Planning Board requirements for shared/common driveways do require a special permit.
 - ❖ Rich stated more trees are removed from the urban canopy then are planted during his 30 years with the DPW. Frontage change requirement from 75 feet to 50 feet. The tree ordinance does not apply. The STO applies to the developer not independent. Should there be a local ordinance seeking approval for healthy trees to be cut down on private property.

Guest Speaker Mollie Freilicher

- A pdf link for Cambridge, Newton & Wellesley ordinances is listed on the website.
- Molly went over the current poster contest and will forward calendars made from the last round.
- State Forest Action Plan is valid for 10 years.
- If anyone would like the Urban Forestry newsletter please provide Molly your email address.
- DCR did limited planting this fall.

Tree City USA/Growth Award

- Arbor Day Foundation updated the Growth Awards. Two area which Northampton should fall under are Work Force Development and Working with Youth. Ten points are needed with submission by December 31st for last year.
- Rob inquired about tree debris recycling and processing the wood for a purpose, such as nourishing new trees.
- Surplus property valued at \$250.00 or greater requires City Council’s approval.
- The need for a list of activities used as a planning tool for Growth Award.
- Subcommittees should be limited to 2 or 3 people.

Ongoing Projects Status

- Fall 2020 planting plan
 - ❖ Rob to update. There was no Spring planting. The fall season had drought issues. As of October 14th, 230 trees were planted. We had plenty of volunteers. The goal is to reach 500 trees a year.

- ❖ Starting tomorrow part two of the South Street planting project will start. Ten cherry trees will be planted on South Street starting at Monroe Street. Rich will oversee watering and mulch.
- Downtown Tree Siting
 - ❖ Each quadrant should be done by 1 or 2 people.
 - ❖ Molly & Jen completed a quadrant which can be viewed on Google Shared Documents.
 - ❖ Marilyn and David will complete their sections this Saturday.
 - ❖ Susan & Molly will work together to complete another section.
 - ❖ Rob will continue planting and complete N1.
 - ❖ Molly would like the quadrants to be completed by the end of year.
 - ❖ Planting sites this year were picked by less populated areas due to COVID. Priority sites are near hospitals and schools.

Any other business not anticipated by the Chair

- Susan expressed that Ryan Fawcett's University of Massachusetts seminar and field work on pruning trees for young tree training was beneficial and should be used.
- David reviewed the open meeting violation laws. Subcommittee members are not allowed to discuss agenda items. Agenda items need to be posted as a public meeting.

To Do List

- Molly will continue working on the ¼ acre radius lots for the Growth Award Sheet.
- Rob will work with Christina on N1.
- David is working on finishing the inventory list. Marilyn and David will work on preparing the STO.
- Marilyn will help David finish F4. She will also work on postcards to 5th Grade Teachers for the poster contest due by March 15, 2021.
- Rich, Molly and Marilyn will be working on the Tree City Growth Awards. Rich and Rob will work on updating the tree and location planting drive.

Closing Comments

- Susan and David thanked Alex Jarrett for sharing the email letter.
- Rich thanked Mollie Freilicher for speaking tonight and all her assistance over the years.
- A motion was proposed, seconded and a roll call vote was taken. There was no discussion.

Motion	Motion By:	Seconded By:	Vote:
To adjourn.	Molly Hale	Susan Lofthouse	Yes 6, No 0, Abstain 0

Meeting adjourned at 6:04 p.m.